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ABSTRACT

In 1986 the State Board of Education of New Jersey approved more rigorous high school graduation requirements in academic subjects. Concern was expressed that requiring additional academic courses could crowd the daily schedules for many students and, in effect, impede their ability to take courses that meet other requirements, needs, and interests. Since the state's currently mandated high school graduation requirements for physical, health, and safety education take up the greatest amount of instructional time, the Board requested that these requirements be reviewed. This report documents the review of these requirements. The study investigated: (1) the background of the statewide physical, health, and safety education requirements; (2) the impact of the requirements on the high schools in New Jersey; (3) the curriculum of the requirements; and (4) the relationship of fitness to the physical, health, and safety education requirements. Recommendations of the Commission are outlined. Supplements include a survey of high school physical education, health, and safety in New Jersey, as well as survey results. (JD)

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STUDY OF PHYSICAL, HEALTH, and SAFETY EDUCATION IN NEW JERSEY

January, 1989

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STUDY OF PHYSICAL, HEALTH, AND SAFETY EDUCATION IN NEW JERSEY

JANUARY 1989

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STUDY OF PHYSICAL, HEALTH, AND SAFETY EDUCATION IN NEW JERSEY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background

Over the past few years, study upon study has indicated that children in the United States fail to measure up academically when compared with students from other developed nations. In a competitive world economy demanding sophisticated skills, American businesses and industry spend billions of dollars each year to teach new employees basic skills. Colleges and the military also warn that entering students and new recruits are not adequately prepared in academics.

Against this background and as part of New Jersey's comprehensive educational reform, the State Board of Education in December, 1986, approved new high school graduation requirements for all public school students in the state. The new state requirements increased the credits needed to graduate from 92 to 110 and required an additional year of social studies, science, and mathematics to be phased in beginning in 1988-89.

In approving the new requirements for additional credits and courses, the board culminated a lengthy process that included a study by a broad-based panel of New Jersey citizens, recommendations from Commissioner of Education Saul Cooperman, and public testimony, as well as deliberations by the board.

As it was considering raising the academic standards for graduation, the board expressed concern that requiring additional academic courses could "crowd" the daily schedules for many students and, in effect, impede their ability to take courses that meet other requirements, needs, and interests (e.g., remedial education, vocational education, multiple foreign languages, fine and performing arts). Since the state's currently mandated high school graduation requirements for physical, health, and safety education take up the greatest amount of instructional time, the board requested that these requirements be reviewed.

In response, the department studied the impact of mandated physical, health, and safety education requirements in order to consider whether any changes should be proposed.

Study and Findings

The department study found that New Jersey's statutes requiring physical, health, and safety education be taught in every grade (except kindergarten) for a minimum of 150 minutes per week dated to 1917. These statutes were developed in reaction to a need for improved physical fitness among military recruits when the United States entered World War I. In developing subsequent administrative code, the state board required 200 minutes per week of physical, health, and safety education (or one period each day, five times a week) for students in the secondary grades.

Key findings of the study are:

- In high school, the current requirement that each student take physical, health, and safety education for each year enrolled results in these courses accounting for 23 percent of the core academic course requirements and 18 percent of the 110 total credits required for graduation.

- In no other curriculum area are students required by statute to take a subject every year they are enrolled in school. Similarly, in no other curriculum area does the law prescribe the number of minutes a subject is taught each year.

- There is no evidence to show that the statutory requirement results in a more physically fit or healthy citizenry.

- More than 20 percent of students' time in physical education classes is consumed by dressing for athletic activity and then dressing again afterwards.

- Data show students have many other opportunities for physical activity; more than 80 percent of students' physical activity currently occurs outside of school.

- If the mandate is eliminated, high schools could have more flexibility in their daily schedules to meet students' diverse learning needs and interests.

There is no question that physical fitness is vital to promoting the well-being of students and producing healthy adults. However, considering the abundant opportunities students have to participate in physical activities of their choice, academic education must be the major emphasis of the school day. Although there are many opportunities for physical activity outside physical education classes, there are few opportunities for students to participate in learning activities in math, science, and/or language arts, etc., outside of school.

Recommendations

The Commissioner's recommendations are:

- The existing statutes mandating physical, health, and safety education (N.J.S.A. 18A:35-5, 6, 7, and 8) should be amended in order to end the mandate for grades 9-12.

- The State Board of Education should act to repeal the present high school graduation requirements of "one credit year" of physical education "for each year of enrollment" (as required by N.J.S.A. 18A:35-7) and act to retain high school requirements for health and safety education (i.e., family life education and drug and alcohol abuse education).

- Local school districts should continue to meet all statute and code requirements for health and safety (i.e., family life education and drug and alcohol abuse education).

- The State Board of Education should require physical fitness assessments to be administered at grades 3, 6, and 10 along with the reporting of individual student performance to the parents, as well as the reporting of grade, school, and district-wide performance to the public.

- Local school districts may offer physical education to high school students who need physical fitness activities as indicated by fitness assessments. Physical education may also be offered for purposes of fitness, team sports, life-long physical activity skills, and recreation. If offered, courses should be implemented in a systematic and planned manner.

- Local school districts should review, improve, and evaluate the effect of the physical education curriculum, grades one through twelve.

Conclusion

The department is not recommending the elimination of physical education in high schools. Rather, to provide all public high schools the flexibility to stress academics and meet diverse student needs, the department is recommending that the statutory and regulatory mandate for physical education be removed. Local districts should be permitted to decide what physical education offerings are appropriate to the needs of their high school students.

The department is proposing, however, that all requirements for health and safety education be maintained. At the same time, it also is recommending that a method be established to assess the physical fitness of the state's children, thereby enabling each local community to determine its own high school physical education program offerings.

STUDY OF PHYSICAL, HEALTH, AND SAFETY EDUCATION IN NEW JERSEY

INTRODUCTION

The State Board of Education, in response to the fact that the administrative code governing high school graduation requirements was about to expire, initiated a study of the requirements for those curricular areas mandated by the state board. A year-long study by a broad-based panel, including educators, students, parents, and business representatives, recommended increased credit requirements for science and math. In his response to the panel report, the Commissioner of Education included an increased requirement for social studies and recommended 110 credits. The board took public testimony and deliberated the requirements for another ten months. The revised code, adopted by the State Board of Education in December, 1986, became effective in January, 1987.

As the Commissioner reviewed the panel's report and as the state board took public testimony and deliberated the increased graduation requirements, one issue surfaced repeatedly: While the increased time requirements for social studies, science, and math were deemed critically necessary, a review of the existing physical, health, and safety education requirement was also necessary. This requirement, the result of a 1917 statute, is given the largest amount of instructional time in the high school. Because of the expanding responsibilities of schools, consideration had to be given to reviewing its efficacy.

In response to this issue, Commissioner of Education Saul Cooperman appointed an internal department committee to study the physical, health, and safety education requirement. The committee's charge was to study the existing physical, health, and safety education requirement and its impact and to consider whether any changes should be proposed for this statewide mandate. Of particular concern was whether the existing statutory requirement in New Jersey for a minimum of 150 minutes for each year in high school should remain as currently mandated statewide.

The physical, health, and safety education requirement constitutes the largest commitment of a high school student's time, equaled only by English, for a student who completes high school in four years. Should a student require more than four years to complete high school, physical, health, and safety education must be taken for every year enrolled, including a fifth year or more. This commitment of time had to be scrutinized as schools focus increasingly on the core academic areas in order to prepare all students to function in an increasingly complex and technological world.

Committee members reviewed relevant research articles and studies in an effort to understand the substantive issues involved in physical, health, and safety education instruction. Members held discussions with New Jersey educators and interest groups (New Jersey Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance and the Governor's Council on Physical Fitness) to learn their opinions about the physical, health, and safety education requirement. Several statewide organizations were solicited to

submit position papers (see Supplement I for a listing of the organizations and a summary of the position papers received). A survey of the state's high schools was conducted to determine the degree of implementation of programs and practices to fulfill the current course and credit requirement. Finally, the requirements and trends in other states were studied.

Committee members were unanimous on the importance of physical fitness in promoting the well-being of students and in producing healthy adults. What the committee members found, however, was that the historic mission of the schools to produce an educated populace was of greater importance for the time spent in high school, considering that the amount of time remaining after school and the opportunities for students to participate in physical activities of their choice are abundant.

This report which is the culmination of the committee's study contains the Commissioner's recommendations based upon the report (see pages 17-18).

STUDY FINDINGS

The study focused on answering four questions:

1. What is the background of the current physical, health, and safety education requirement?

2. What is the impact of this requirement on the high schools in New Jersey?

3. What is the curriculum of physical, health, and safety education in secondary schools in New Jersey?

4. What is the relationship of fitness to the physical, health, and safety education requirement?

What is the Background of the Statewide Physical, Health, and Safety Education Requirement?

The current physical, health, and safety education requirement for high school students is defined in state statutes and administrative code. The statutes, which date back to 1917 when the United States entered into World War I, probably were passed in reaction to the lack of fitness of the New Jersey and American youth who took the armed forces physical fitness examinations.

The statutes require:

N.J.S.A. 18A:35-5. "Each board of education shall conduct as a part of the instruction in the public schools courses in health, safety, and physical education, which courses shall be adapted to the ages and capabilities of the pupils in the several grades and departments."

N.J.S.A. 18A:35-6. "Such courses, and the instruction therein, shall be subject to the general supervision and direction of the Commissioner...."

N.J.S.A. 18A:35-7. "Every pupil, except kindergarten pupils, attending the public schools, insofar as he is physically fit and capable of doing so, as determined by the medical inspector, shall take such courses, which shall be part of the curriculum prescribed for the several grades, and the conduct and attainment of the pupils shall be marked as in other courses or subjects, and the standing of the pupil in connection therewith shall form part of the requirements for promotion or graduation."

N.J.S.A. 18A:35-8. "The time devoted to such courses shall aggregate at least two and one-half hours in each school week, or proportionately less when holidays fall within the week."

N.J.S.A. 18A:40A-1. "Instructional programs on the nature of drugs, alcohol and controlled dangerous substances...and their physiological, psychological, sociological and legal effects on the individual, the family and society

shall be taught in each public school and in each grade from kindergarten through 12 in a manner adapted to the age and understanding of the pupils. The programs shall be based upon the curriculum guidelines established by the Commissioner of Education pursuant to section 2 of this act, and shall be included in the curriculum for each grade in such a manner as to provide a thorough and comprehensive treatment of the subject."

The Administrative Code adopted in 1986 states:

> N.J.A.C. 6:8-7.1(c)1i(5) "One credit year of physical education, health and safety for each year of enrollment as required by N.J.S.A. 18A:35-7."
>
> N.J.A.C. 6:29-7.1(c) "The district's family life education program shall be implemented comprehensively through the coordinate sequential elementary/secondary curriculum with instructional units appropriate to the age, growth and development, and maturity of the pupils."
>
> N.J.A.C. 6:29-9.6(a) "Each school district having secondary school grades shall incorporate a drug and alcohol education unit into its health education curriculum in accordance with existing Department of Education guidelines. A minimum of 10 clock hours per school year of drug and alcohol education shall be provided pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18:4-28.7."

The statutes require physical, health, and safety education to be taught in every grade. At the high school level, where physical education generally is treated like every other course, the administrative code states that the course must be one-credit year and offered every day for one period (40 minutes minimum) and that the grade earned must become part of the student's grade point average. However, according to the results of the department's survey (See Supplement II, Survey Report, New Jersey State Department of Education, September, 1987) with 93% of the secondary schools responding, there is variation in the number of minutes allocated to physical education, health, and safety instruction. Thirty-six high schools offer less than 200 minutes while 289 offer 200+ minutes of instruction.

The code does not limit the number of years the course must be taken. The phrase, "For each year of enrollment," without a qualifying statement, is interpreted from the statute (N.J.S.A. 18A:35-7) to mean that a student returning to complete courses after four years of high school must continue to enroll in physical education, health, and safety even if he or she has satisfactorily completed four years. The High School Graduation Requirements Study Panel Report (May, 1986) concluded, "The Administrative Code should be revised to read, 'One credit year of physical education, health, and safety for each year of enrollment, up to four credit years.'" The recommendation was not included in the revised code adopted by the State Board of Education (January 1987), however, due to the statutory requirement.

Except for the two-year requirement of a "Course in history of the United States in high school" (N.J.S.A. 18A:35-1); "Nature and purpose of the United States history course" (N.J.S.A. 18A:35-2); the "Course in civics, geography, and history of New Jersey" (N.J.S.A. 18A:35-3) in elementary grades; and

"Instructional programs on drugs, alcohol and controlled dangerous substances" (N.J.S.A. 18:40A-1), committee members found that no other curricular and/or subject areas are mandated in statute.

In no other curriculum area are students required by statute to take a subject every year they are enrolled in school, and in no other curriculum area is the number of minutes a subject is to be taught each and every year prescribed by statute.

The committee concluded that the statutes, by mandating a course of study in physical, health, and safety education for a minimum of 150 minutes per week for students in grades 9 through 12, unduly hinder a school district's flexibility to determine and offer maximum needed educational opportunities to its students, particularly in light of the many competing demands at the high school level.

What is the Impact of the Physical, Health, and Safety Education Requirement on the High Schools in New Jersey?

In response to numerous reports, including A Nation at Risk which publicized the overall poor state of American education and provoked public debate, the New Jersey Governor, legislature, State Board of Education, and Commissioner have taken the lead in implementing educational reforms, while demanding accountability from the public schools. This accountability is measured partly by standardized test scores, High School Proficiency Test scores, and increased graduation requirements.

The Administrative Code requires that by the year 1990-91 students entering the ninth grade must complete 110 credits for a state-endorsed high school diploma, including: one credit year of English for each year of enrollment up to four years; three credit years of social studies; three credit years of mathematics; two credit years of science; one credit year of a fine, practical, and/or performing arts; one-half credit year of career education (this requirement may be infused into existing course curricula); and one credit year of physical education, health, and safety for each year of enrollment. In order to graduate, these students will be required to earn the state minimum of 110 credits (and more in districts mandating additional credits). Of these 110 credits, 85 will be required for core courses (assuming that career education is infused and not offered as a separate course), leaving 25 credits for elective or non-mandated courses.

If the academic subjects are to be a priority and the primary focus of schooling, then there is a question as to whether it is appropriate for physical, health, and safety education to be considered as important as English (as indicated by the amount of time required for graduation) and more important than all other core academic subjects identified by the State Board of Education. Physical, health, and safety education comprises approximately 18% of the state total (110) credits and 23% of the core academic subjects required for graduation. This statewide mandate limits the number of elective, remedial, and/or vocational courses available for students to select.

The committee raised the issue of the appropriateness of requiring four years of physical, health, and safety education for a high school diploma. This is especially meaningful when New Jersey educators are trying to improve the meaning of the diploma to ensure that children are academically prepared for the workplace and continuing education institutions in response to the demands of employers, college faculties, and the military. As a result of the statute, the physical education, health, and safety courses are given the same standing in the high school curriculum as other courses although most colleges and employers do not consider these grades or credits when determining admissions or employment.

To view the requirement from a different perspective, a typical high school schedule usually includes six instructional periods each day, with an additional period generally reserved for lunch. These six leave students with the possibility of accumulating a maximum of 30 credits each year. Thus, the typical student, who must fulfill the minimum state core course requirement of 85 credits (a total which does not take into account additional course and credit requirements within individual districts), would spend the first 2½ years taking the required courses and still be required to take English and physical, health, and safety education in the senior year, as well.

It is concluded, therefore, in light of state and additional local school district graduation requirements, that there is insufficient flexibility in a student's schedule for special needs and remedial programs, vocational education programs (which require travel and large blocks of instructional time), and elective courses. It is critical that high schools provide students with the time to pursue these opportunities which will prepare them to function in an increasingly complex and demanding society.

What is the Curriculum of the Physical, Health, and Safety Education Requirement?

Educators historically have not agreed upon a curriculum for physical education. According to John Taylor (1986), "There is no notion of sequential curriculum structure, goals, skill acquisition, assessment needs and learning theories. Consequently, a student is as likely to be involved with the same content at the same skill level with similar instructional strategies in the 12th grade as in the 7th grade. This is a major problem about which physical educators should be concerned." He continues, "The NAEP [National Assessment of Educational Progress] does not include physical education in its assessment (unlike mathematics, language arts, science, and social studies) because there is no established schedule for students to acquire skills or for student assessments at any grade or age level."

Committee members found that there was disagreement in the physical education curriculum literature about the use and meaning of the term physical education. Physical education is a general term which describes education for physical fitness, exercise, and motor skill development. It usually refers to the teaching of sports and recreational activities, including team sports as a major thrust, and individual or "life-time sports" and dance, as

well. Researchers (Casperson, Powell, & Christenson; March-April, 1985) in attempting to define the terms, "physical activity", "exercise", and "physical fitness" -- all different concepts -- found that the terms are often confused with one another and used interchangeably.

In order to learn what physical and health education entails and how it is implemented in New Jersey high schools, the department conducted a survey (Survey Report, see Supplement II). From the survey, it was found that 63.1% of New Jersey schools offer physical education for three-fourths of the year and health education and safety for one-fourth of the year. In 49.4% of these schools, the instructional pattern is 27 weeks of physical education and 9 weeks of health education instruction. In 13.7% of these schools, the ratio is 30 weeks of physical education to 10 weeks of health education instruction for each year of the high school experience. Ordinarily, instruction is delivered five days a week for a minimum of 40 minutes per day.

High schools reported that approximately 70% of the physical education class period is spent in activities (warm-up, instruction, and practice) and 30% is spent on administrative and locker room tasks. Of the time that is spent in actual activities (70% of the total physical education period), 50% is spent learning and practicing individual and team sports, 25% in fitness activities, and 25% in carry-over and other sports. Although 253 high schools (78.6%) reported requiring at least one physical fitness test for students, the amount of time devoted to fitness activities is an indication that these are not the highest priority in the high school physical education class. The highest priority appears to be sports (team, individual, and carry-over).

The standards of mastery which students must achieve in order to receive a passing grade in physical education generally are loosely defined. The New Jersey School Boards Association concludes (paper submitted, April 1987): "School districts are reluctant to fail students who cannot meet requirements in physical education. Typically, if a student is punctual, dresses for gym, and is not a discipline problem, the student will pass." Further, the association feels that "by not being able to define the mandate except in terms of hours and by not setting and/or enforcing a standard for physical education, the concept of a graduation standard (for physical education) is itself undermined."

Although the health education curriculum is more defined in terms of the content of the course, i.e., driver education, family life education, drug and alcohol abuse, suicide, diseases, etc., many of the components are infused within a larger curriculum. Therefore, the department's survey and a review of the literature do not yield an accurate picture of the length of instructional time that each high school provides for each particular area of the health and safety curriculum. Discussions with educators have revealed that the health and safety component is structured, tested, and graded according to a specific body of knowledge. Students who have not learned the content material are apt to fail the health education and safety component. In some school districts, if a student fails the health and safety component, the student must make up that portion only.

In summary, the health education component of the requirement appears to be more defined and have a more structured curriculum than the physical education component. The state mandates for family life and drug and alcohol abuse education, and any district requirement for driver's education may, in part, account for the structure. The health-related issues in society and the need to respond to health crises in the general population have been significant in defining the content. There is agreement among the committee, and, it appears, in much of society as to the need to educate students on health-related issues confronting society.

What is the Relationship of Fitness to the Physical, Health, and Safety Education Requirement?

The fitness of students in relation to the the amount of time devoted to physical education was a predominant concern among committee members. This focus emerged due to the repeated reports that called for improved fitness of our youth. Therefore, the committee searched for reports and/or studies which indicated that New Jersey students, with a requirement of physical education for every year of enrollment in school, are any more fit, more knowledgeable, and/or more responsible for their physical well-being than their counterparts nationally. No evidence of increased fitness, knowledge, nor responsibility was found.

The committee reviewed reports which support the strengthening of the physical education requirement in the schools. According to these reports, the trend nationally appears to be toward a more obese and less fit school-age population. The group considered in the national study included students from New Jersey school districts. However, data for specific states are not compiled or reported separately. The arguments for a physical education requirement, focusing primarily on the need for physical fitness, are summarized below. The President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports (1985) concluded:

1. The performance of youth in 1985 is not much different from that of youth in 1975, and is still at a low level.

2. There is a low level of performance on cardiorespiratory endurance tests. Heart disease is being called a pediatric disease because the conditions which relate to these problems are developing in so many children. "High levels of cardiorespiratory endurance have been shown to be related to a reduction in heart disease and to a longer life."

3. "There is poor performance by large numbers of boys and girls on tests of arm and shoulder muscle strength and endurance."

4. "The large number of boys and girls who perform at low levels...portend adults with back problems."

5. "These studies support a large volume of related evidence that increased emphasis is required to improve the levels of physical

> fitness...There is also a proven relationship to intellectual performance and general physical health."

Various reports and newspaper articles have invoked this report to bemoan the sorry state of student physical fitness and publicize the need for fitness.

The American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance (AAHPERD) reports that physical activity has numerous beneficial outcomes. Among the positive outcomes reported for physical activity are the promotion of academic learning, cognitive development, and a readiness to learn. The enhancement of students' self-esteem, self-worth, and interpersonal relationships, as well as the development of responsible behavior and independence are among the outcomes listed for physical activity. Additionally, physical activity aids in the regulation of obesity and improves bone structure and cardiac function. Furthermore, physical activity improves overall student health by increasing cardiovascular endurance, aerobic fitness, and muscular strength and power.

Additionally, the New Jersey Education Association and New Jersey School Business Officials argue (papers submitted, April 1987) that the learning experiences in physical education are unique to the entire educational process in that they address the physiological and psychomotor development. In both papers, the authors stress that the cognitive processes involved in physical education activity require the use of both hemispheres of the brain. This will aid in learning, they imply.

The committee reviewed the research and concluded that physical education is a vital part of the development of a child. Many studies, which report that physical education improves coordination and motor skills and in turn academic performance, focus on students in the more formative years of development.

However, the committee, recognizing the importance of physical education, analyzed the research for the relationship between the number of years of physical education required and the fitness of the school population. It found in the course of its review that there is little or no relationship. Iverson, Fielding, Crow, and Christenson (1985) state, "It appears that a major opportunity to influence favorable physical activity in the United States is being missed in schools. A large majority of students are enrolled in physical education classes, but the classes appear to have little effect on the current physical fitness levels of children and, furthermore, have little impact on developing life-long physical activity skills." This assessment is substantiated by the findings of the department's survey which indicate that of the activity time in physical education (which averages 70% of the class period) only 25% is allocated to physical fitness and 25% to carry-over sports.

Martin Johnson (1985), in his article "Physical Education-Fitness or Fraud," cites five reasons in support of physical activity, but states, "These research findings provide excellent support for a physical education program; however, children do not automatically benefit merely by attending a physical education class." Jim Lefebvre (1983) quotes Allan J. Ryan, editor-in-chief

of the Physical and Sports Medicine, "This movement toward more vigorous activity for people of all ages has been truly a popular one, and physicians and physical educators have had relatively little to do with it except to support and encourage it." The committee concluded that the research cannot substantiate that the amount of physical activity in school is producing healthier and more fit students. It appears that more than half the time in physical education is spent on activities other than those which could produce a healthier and more fit student.

Today, there are more organized sports programs accessible to students, e.g., Little League, PSAL, fitness clubs, etc., than at any other time. There is ample opportunity for students to participate in sports and recreation activities, not only as part of their schooling, but outside of the school and school day, as well. According to information collected by the New Jersey Interscholastic Athletic Association, the number of students participating in 19 interscholastic sports is approximately 182,000 (see Supplement III). Considering the number of students enrolled in high school and students participating in more than one sport, it is estimated that 1 of every 3 students participates in interscholastic sports. Furthermore, students also participate in intramurals, particularly in middle schools.

The National Children and Youth Fitness Study "After Physical Education..." (1985) states, "Perhaps the most important single conclusion from the data on average weekly time devoted to physical activity is that the typical youth performs the overwhelming majority of his or her physical activity in a setting other than the school's physical education programs (760 minutes weekly versus 141 minutes per week in the physical education class)." Among students in grades 10-12, the average amount of time per week devoted to physical activity outside of the school setting is 748 minutes for boys and 706 minutes for girls. If, as the National Children and Youth Fitness Study asserts, over 80% of a student's physical activity occurs outside school, then the prescribed number of years and time per week in school appears to have limited relevance in today's world, particularly given the increasing academic demands.

In studying the other states' requirements, the committee could find no direct relationship between fitness and the number of years mandated for physical education. In fact, there was a wide discrepancy in the requirements. The national average for high school graduation is 1.4 years of health and physical education (compiled by the Louisiana Department of Education; March, 1987).

A review of the graduation requirements, as reported for the Louisiana survey and in subsequent discussions with state education departments, reveals that Illinois requires 4.5 years. New Jersey ranks second with 4 years and possibly more if a student attends high school for more than 4 years. Rhode Island requires 100 minutes a week (50 for physical education and 50 for health education) for all four years. New York requires four years; however, the number of days per week that physical education is taken varies. Of the fifty states and Washington, D.C. (total 51), 4 states (7.8%) require four or more years of health and physical education, 1 state (1.9%) requires 3 years, 1 state (1.9%) requires 2.5 years, 9 states (17.6%) require 2 years, 9 states

(17.6% including Washington, D.C.) require 1.5 years, 17 states (33%) require 1 year, 3 states (5.8%) require 0 years, 4 states (7.8%) leave the requirement to the discretion of the local school district, and 3 states (5.8%) have other requirements (½ year, 1.2 years, and 1.25 years).

Although New Jersey has had the most rigorous requirement in physical education for perhaps 70 years (only Illinois requires more time now), there are no studies to indicate that New Jersey students are more physically fit than their counterparts nationally. Statistics which indicate that New Jersey students pass military physicals at a greater rate than the national population are not available; and data showing that when reporting for military duty, New Jersey youth were any better prepared for the rigors of the military life than their counterparts throughout the country have not been collected. Whether the probable intent of the statutes ever produced a fit body of youth prepared for the armed forces is questionable.

Committee members concluded that there was a weak link between a high school requirement for 4 years of physical education and the fitness and health of students. Although they did not discount the medical reports which encourage physical fitness as a way of reducing health risks, they did not find in their search of the literature that the intended learning and practices resulted from the period of time presently allocated for physical education classes. Further, the committee felt that students generally take advantage of the ample opportunities after school to participate in fitness and sports activities.

CONCLUSIONS

To summarize the conclusions of the department's study:

- The proportion of time devoted to physical, health, and safety education as a required core subject is not in alignment with the relative mission of high schools.

- Considering the abundant opportunities students have to participate in physical activities of their choice, academic education must be the major emphasis of students' time spent in high school. There are few opportunities for students to participate in learning activities in math, science, and/or language arts, etc., outside of high school.

- The content and quality of the physical, health, and safety education curriculum, grades K-12, need further review, definition, and standards.

- The existing statutory requirement does not appear to yield a more healthy and physically fit citizen.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In light of the conclusions of the study, the Commissioner recommends the following actions:

1. The existing statutes mandating physical, health, and safety education (N.J.S.A. 18A:35-5, 6, 7, and 8) should be amended in order to end the mandate for grades 9-12.

2. The State Board of Education should act to repeal the present high school graduation requirements of "one credit year" of physical education "for each year of enrollment" (as required by N.J.S.A. 18A:35-7) and act to retain high school requirements for health and safety education (i.e., family life education and drug and alcohol abuse education).

3. Local school districts should continue to meet all statute and code requirements for health and safety (i.e., family life education and drug and alcohol abuse education).

4. The State Board of Education should require physical fitness assessments to be administered at grades 3, 6, and 10 along with the reporting of individual student performance to the parents, as well as the reporting of grade, school, and district-wide performance to the public.

5. Local school districts may offer physical education to high school students who need physical fitness activities as indicated by fitness assessments. Physical education may also be offered for purposes of fitness, teams sports, life-long physical activity skills, and recreation. If offered, it should be implemented in a systematic and planned manner.

6. Local school districts should review, improve, and evaluate the effect of the physical education curriculum, grades one through twelve.

Further, the Commissioner recommends that local boards of education be responsible for assessing the physical fitness of students. The fitness tests data may be used to improve physical education, give important information to parents, and determine a physical education program which may be offered for those secondary students (grades 9-12) who need it and as an elective program for those who want to take it. These physical education programs could be scheduled either during, before, or after school, at the discretion of the local board of education.

Approximately 78 percent of New Jersey's high schools are currently requiring a physical fitness test. Increasing numbers of elementary schools are also conducting physical fitness tests. Six states (California, Florida, Hawaii, New York, Rhode Island, and Virigina) currently require physical fitness testing (Illinois will require testing in 1993). The assessment instruments most commonly used are a modification of the President's Council on Physical

Fitness Test or the American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance Physical Best Test. The tests are generally administered in grades 3, 6, and 10. Testing occurs in these grades based upon the stages of student physical development. Norms below grade 3 have not proved to be reliable. By grade 6, most students have mastered most fundamental skills, and necessary corrections and improvements through a fitness program could be administered beyond this grade. By the end of grade 10, most students have been through puberty, which tends to skew many physical fitness test results. This is the time when a life-long fitness program could begin.

A committee of local New Jersey educators and others will be convened to study and report to the Commissioner the test(s) that would be used for assessment. The Commissioner will then recommend the test(s) to be used for statewide assessment to the State Board of Education. It is recommended that local school districts be responsible for administering and reporting the test results to the parents of local enrolled student, as well as to the public, for all students in grades 3, 6, and 10.

SUPPLEMENT I

Statewide Organizations Asked to Submit Position Papers

1. New Jersey Association of School Administrators
2. New Jersey Association of School Business Officials
3. New Jersey Congress of Parents and Teachers
4. New Jersey Education Association
5. New Jersey Principals and Supervisors Association
6. New Jersey School Boards Association

Summary of Comments

The department received responses from three of the six organizations who were contacted and invited to submit position papers.

The New Jersey Education Association submitted a report prepared by the New Jersey Association of Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance in 1985 to address high school graduation requirements. The New Jersey Association of School Business Officials submitted a section of the same report. Salient points from both papers include:

- "Physical activity is necessary to support normal growth."
- "Inactivity in youth can have a negative impact on the functional capacity of a mature adult..."
- High school students should be taught the need to exercise for life-long benefits.
- Physical education develops the psychomotor domain.
- "Studies indicate that the benefits of physical fitness and related activities can aid in the students' classroom achievement."
- "The learning experiences in physical education are unique to the entire educational process."
- "Physical education addresses the social and emotional attitudes as well as the promotion of self-preservation."

New Jersey School Boards Association "believes that physical education has a legitimate educational role in the public schools...Its purpose is to teach the student physical, mental, and emotional skills, how to use them now and when he/she becomes an adult. However, NJSBA believes that local districts should decide the amount of time devoted to instruction..." The issues developed to support the position are:

- The curriculum and definition of physical education are not clear.
- There does not appear to be a match between the time spent in the course and student outcomes.
- The appropriateness of the physical education requirement, which is defined in terms of hours and not standards, for an academic diploma must be questioned.
- The increased high school requirements and remediation for the HSPT greatly reduces the opportunity for students to take elective courses.
- The physical education requirement should be addressed at the local level.

For copies of the above referenced position papers, contact:

New Jersey State Department of Education
Bureau of Curriculum and Technology
225 West State Street
Trenton, New Jersey 08625

SUPPLEMENT II

HIGH SCHOOL PHYSICAL EDUCATION, HEALTH, AND SAFETY

SURVEY RESULTS

New Jersey State Department of Education
225 West State Street
CN 500
Trenton, NJ 08625

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

1. School districts offer various patterns of physical education, health, and safety. The two most common instructional patterns (see Table 3a) indicate physical education instruction for three-fourths of a year (27/30 weeks per year, 5 days per week, 1 period per day, and 40 or more minutes per day) and health and safety education (see Table 10a) for one quarter of a year (9/10 weeks per year, 5 days per week, 1 period per day, and 40 or more minutes per period.) It is only when the data are analyzed in greater detail that a difference is observed. Thirteen urban high schools (17.6%) offer 18 weeks of instruction (½ year) in physical education and 18 weeks of instruction (½ year) in health education and safety. This pattern is not usually found in non-urban high schools (see Tables 3b and 10b). However, for most schools there is no practical instructional time differences between urban and non-urban schools.

2. Approximately 70% of the physical education period in schools statewide is spent in instructional and warm-up activities. Within the physical education period, approximately 50% of the time is devoted to instruction in individual and team activities throughout the four years of high school. Physical fitness activities accounted for 25% of the physical education instructional time and 25% was spent in carry-over sports. There are few practical time differences between urban and non-urban schools in these categories.

3. More than 75% of the high schools require students to take at least one physical fitness test during the four years of high school. There are no major differences in the requirement between urban and non-urban schools.

4. It is difficult to ascertain the time spent teaching specific health education and safety subjects because various mandates and subjects are infused into broader curriculum areas, e.g., AIDS prevention may be infused into other curriculum areas. Driver education is taught by a majority of non-urban schools in the tenth grade and urban schools in the eleventh grade.

5. A majority of schools are anticipating revising their physical education, health, and safety curriculum.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION, HEALTH, AND SAFETY SURVEY REPORT

INTRODUCTION

In the fall of 1986, Commissioner Cooperman formed a committee to review the long-standing requirement of four years of physical education, health, and safety for high school graduation. The newly enacted and more rigorous academic high school graduation requirements demand that greater percentage of the school day be devoted to these requirements.

New Jersey statute 18A:35-7 requires physical education, health, and safety courses "...which shall be part of the curriculum prescribed for the several grades and the conduct and attainment of the pupils shall be marked as in other courses or subjects, and the standing of the pupil in connection therewith shall form part of the requirements for promotion or graduation". N.J.S.A. 18A:35-8 requires "The time devoted to such course shall aggregate at least two and one-half hours in each school week, or proportionately less when holidays fall within the week."

New Jersey Administrative Code 6:8-7.1(c)1i(5) requires "One credit year of physical education, health, and safety for each year of enrollment as required by N.J.S.A. 18A:35-7."

The survey of the high school physical education, health, and safety program is designed to provide the committee with information on how high schools implement the requirements as established by statute and code.

Questions on the survey were grouped into two categories:

1. How the physical education program is implemented in each high school; and

2. How the health education and safety program is implemented in each high school.

Appendix A contains the survey instrument.

STATEWIDE SUMMARY OF RESPONDENTS

The survey was sent to 271 high school districts in New Jersey, requesting that a separate survey be completed for each high school in the school district. Responses were received from 322 or 93.1% of the 346 high schools. The number of responses by county is shown in Table 1.

TABLE 1

Number of Responses by County

County	Number of Schools Responding	Percent of State
Atlantic	8	2.5
Bergen	45	14.0
Burlington	13	4.0
Camden	19	5.9
Cape May	4	1.2
Cumberland	5	1.6
Essex	33	10.2
Gloucester	13	4.0
Hudson	15	4.7
Hunterdon	5	1.6
Mercer	11	3.4
Middlesex	29	9.0
Monmouth	24	7.5
Morris	22	6.8
Ocean	13	4.0
Passaic	13	4.0
Salem	5	1.6
Somerset	14	4.3
Sussex	9	2.8
Union	16	5.0
Warren	6	1.9

In this report individual high school responses are summarized statewide unless significant differences are found between urban and non-urban responses.

TABLE 2

High School Responses to Survey
N = 322

Urban vs Non-Urban

	Number of Schools	Percent of Schools
Urban	74	23%
Non-Urban	248	77%

DESCRIPTION OF THE PHYSICAL EDUCATION PROGRAM

Each high school indicated the number of weeks per year, days per week, periods per day, and minutes per period students were required to attend physical education classes. The results statewide indicate two predominant patterns for scheduling physical education instruction in the high schools. Table 3a summarizes the results statewide. One hundred nineteen schools (36.9%) of the high schools responding statewide did not conform to the two most frequent patterns.

TABLE 3a

Most Frequent Physical Education Instructional Patterns

Statewide N=322

Weeks Per Year* (Physical Education only)	Days Per Week	Periods Per Day	Minutes Per Period **	Number of Schools	Percent of State
27	5	1	40+	159	49.4%
30	5	1	40+	44	13.7%

*The total number of weeks in a school year varied between 36 and 40 in most cases. The number of weeks per year reported in this table is for physical education only. Table 10a reports the number of weeks of health education and safety instruction. The number of weeks in both tables represent the full school year.

**The number of minutes in a period varied between 40 and 50 with 40, 42, and 45 minutes the three most common number of minutes.

Analysis of the physical education instructional patterns in urban versus non-urban high schools revealed additional patterns within each category. Tables 3b and 3c show the breakdown of the four most commonly indicated patterns of physical education instruction for urban and non-urban districts respectively.

TABLE 3b

Most Frequent Physical Education Instructional Patterns

Urban N=74

Weeks Per Year*	Days Per Week	Periods Per Day	Minutes Per Period **	Number of Schools	Percent of Urban
27	5	1	40+	30	40.5%
30	5	1	40+	16	21.7%
18	5	1	40+	13	17.6%
20	5	1	40+	5	6.7%

Sixty-four districts, or 86.5%, fit into the above four categories. Ten schools, or 13.5%, indicated physical education instructional patterns which were less frequently occurring and not listed in the table above.

*and **-see remarks for Table 3a

TABLE 3c

Most Frequent Physical Education Instructional Patterns

Non-Urban N=248

Weeks Per Year*	Days Per Week	Periods Per Day	Minutes Per Period **	Number of Schools	Percent of Non-Urban
27	5	1	40+	129	52.0%
30	5	1	40+	28	11.3%
27	4	1	40+	19	7.7%
28	5	1	40+	11	4.4%

* and ** - see remarks for Table 3a

One hundred eighty-seven high schools, or 75.4%, are represented in Table 3c. Sixty-one, or 24.6%, have physical education instructional patterns which are less common and not shown on Table 3c.

Table 4 shows the mean physical education instructional pattern of schools statewide. For the most important comparison, minutes per week, there is no statistically significant difference.

TABLE 4

Mean Patterns of Instruction in Physical Education

Mean	Statewide (N=306)
Weeks Per Year	27.41
Days Per Week	4.84
Periods Per Day	1.00
Minutes Per Period	43.45
Minutes Per Week	210.42
Hours Per Year	95.82

The survey included a question on the average percent of time spent in each physical education period performing certain tasks. Table 5 lists the mean percentage of time students spent in each task statewide. (See Appendix C for urban vs. non-urban comparisons)

TABLE 5

Mean Percent of Time Spent by Students In Each Physical Education Period Performing Specific Tasks

Task	Statewide
Instruction - Practicing New Skills/Reinforcing Skills	57.82%
Locker Room Activities (changing, showering etc.)	21.13%
Warm-up Activities	11.93%
Administrative Tasks (attendance, discipline)	6.20%
Other	2.92%

Respondents indicated the percent of time allocated for teaching specific activities in each year of high school. Table 6 shows the mean percentage of time spent on each activity at each grade level statewide.

TABLE 6

Mean Percent of Time In Physical Education Teaching Specific Activities

Statewide

Activity	Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12
Individual and Team Activities	51.0%	50.2%	44.0%	43.4%
Physical Fitness	23.5%	21.8%	20.2%	19.8%
Carry-Over Sports (Instruction)	20.3%	23.6%	31.6%	22.9%
Other (specified by high schools)	4.2%	3.4%	3.5%	3.3%
Other (specified by high schools)	1.0%	1.0%	0.7%	0.6%

A comparison of the type of instruction offered in the physical education class shows that approximately 25% of the time is spent in physical fitness activities, 50% in individual and team sports, and 25% in activities related to carry-over sports. Carry-over sports instruction (skills students will use later in life) takes on a greater proportion of time in the 11th and 12th grades than in the 9th and 10th grades. Less than 5% of the physical education time is spent in activities other than those listed. (Although there is some difference between urban and non-urban schools in the percent of time spent in the listed activities on the survey, this difference is not substantial, see Appendix D).

A physical fitness test is required by 253, or 78.6%, of the high schools statewide. Sixty-three high schools, or 19.6%, did not require students to take a physical fitness test. Six schools (1.8%) did not respond to the question. Table 7 illustrates these results statewide.

TABLE 7

Breakdown of Schools Requiring and Not Requiring a Physical Fitness Test

Percent (Total Number of High Schools in Category)

Fitness Test	Statewide
Required	78.6% (253)
Not Required	19.6% (63)
Schools Not Responding	1.8% (6)

Total Number = 322

There is no significant difference between urban and non-urban schools in the requirement for a physical fitness test as part of physical education instruction, (see Appendix E).

Of the schools which indicated that a physical fitness test was required, 113 schools administered some form of the American Association of Health Physical Education Recreation and Dance (AAHPERD) fitness test, 63 schools administered a form of the President's Council on Physical Fitness Test, 35 tested students on a district or school-developed test, and 28 used a form of the United States Marine fitness test. Fifty-five schools administered two tests, 25 three tests and approximately ten schools administered four tests. In most cases where a school required multiple tests, a different test was administered on each grade level.

Schools were asked to report on whether they had a policy of exempting athletic team members from physical education during the entire season the sport is being played. Table 8 summarizes the results statewide. (See Appendix F for urban vs. non-urban comparison).

TABLE 8

Comparison of Responses to the Exemption of Athletic Teams Members From Physical Education Classes

Statewide

Total Number of High Schools in Category (Percent)

	Statewide
Routinely	8 (2.5%)
On An Exception Basis Only	283 (88.2%)
No	30 (9.3%)

Number of schools = 321

There is little practical difference among high schools routinely exempting athletes from physical education classes. Overwhelmingly, schools indicated that an athlete would be exempt from physical education on the day the athletic event is scheduled, if the athlete petitions to be excused.

Table 9 summarizes the statewide responses to whether high schools have a policy of independent study - credit for activities not performed on school time, on school grounds and without attending class - in physical education.

TABLE 9

Policy of Independent Study in Physical Education

Percent (Total Number of High Schools in Category)

Policy	Statewide
Yes	17.4% (56)
No	82.6% (266)

Of the 56 schools responding "Yes" (see above table) to having a policy of independent study, 72.7% schools statewide, 66.7% of the urban, and 74.5% of the non-urban schools reported that the policy is well-known to the students.

There is no significant difference between urban and non-urban schools in allowing independent study for physical education, (see Appendix G). Of those schools allowing for independent study, less than four percent of the students took advantage of that option. There is no significant difference in urban and non-urban schools.

DESCRIPTION OF THE HEALTH EDUCATION AND SAFETY PROGRAM

Each high school indicated the number of weeks per year, days per week, periods per day, and minutes per period students were required to attend health education and safety instruction. The results statewide indicate two predominant patterns for scheduling this instruction in the high schools. Table 10a summarizes the results statewide.

TABLE 10a

Most Frequent Health Education and Safety Instructional Patterns

Statewide N=322

Weeks Per Year* (Health Education-Safety only)	Days Per Week	Periods Per Day	Minute Per Period **	Number of Schools	Percent of State
9	5	1	40+	173	53.7%
10	5	1	40+	47	14.6%

*The total number of weeks in a school year varied between 36 and 40 in most cases. The number of weeks per year reported in this table is for health education and safety instruction, only. Table 3a reports the number of weeks of physical education instruction. The number of weeks in both tables represent the full school year.

**The number of minutes in a period varied between 40 and 50 with 40, 42, and 45 minutes the three most common number of minutes.

One hundred twelve schools, 34.8% of the high schools statewide, do not conform to the two most frequent patterns. In analyzing the health education and safety instructional patterns in urban versus non-urban high schools, additional patterns are discerned within each category. Tables 10b and 10c show the four most commonly indicated patterns of health and safety instruction for urban and non-urban districts.

TABLE 10b

Most Frequent Health Education and Safety Instructional Patterns

Urban N=74

Weeks Per Year*	Days Per Week	Periods Per Day	Minutes Per Period **	Number of Schools	Percent of State
9	5	1	40+	30	40.5%
10	5	1	40+	16	21.6%
18	5	1	40+	13	17.6%
20	5	1	40+	5	6.8%

*and ** - see remarks for Table 10a.

Sixty-four, or 86.5%, of the high schools conform to one of the four above patterns. Ten, or 13.5%, of the schools do not have one of the above patterns.

TABLE 10c

Most Frequent Health Education and Safety Instructional Patterns

Non-Urban N=248

Weeks Per Year*	Days Per Week	Periods Per Day	Minutes Per Period **	Number of Schools	Percent of State
9	5	1	40+	143	57.7%
10	5	1	40+	31	12.5%
9	4	1	40+	19	7.7%
8	5	1	40+	8	3.2%

*and ** - see remarks for Table 10a.

Two hundred one schools, or 81.1%, of the non-urban schools conform to the above patterns. Forty-seven schools, or approximately 19%, offer alternative patterns of instruction.

It appears, based on the four most frequent patterns of instruction, that some urban high schools (18) offered more of a balance between physical education and health education and safety instruction based on the amount of time offered for each. (There are some non-urban schools which offered similar instructional patterns; however, they are not one of the four most frequent patterns.)

Reporting of the curriculum and method of instruction of the health and safety component was inconsistent and prevents an accurate description. The drug and alcohol and family life curricula illustrate this point. Since there is a requirement for drug and alcohol and for family life instruction in each grade, many schools indicated that these areas were infused into various other components of the health and safety curriculum, e.g., mental health or first aid and safety, while others listed instruction in each area separately. For example, approximately 130 schools included as part of the curriculum the following topics: health, mental health, hygiene, death and suicide, diseases, and bodily functions.

Driver education is offered by a majority of schools (221/68.8%) in the tenth grade (26 urban and 195 non-urban). The eleventh grade is the second most common grade for driver education to be offered (44 urban and 55 non-urban schools). Ten non-urban schools require driver education in more than one grade.

Of the 313 schools that responded to whether they are anticipating revision of the locally developed physical education, health, and safety curriculum, 179 schools (57.2%) statewide indicated they are anticipating revising the curriculum; and 134 (42.8%) responded they were not anticipating revisions in the physical education health, and safety curriculum.

One hundred forty-two (58.9%) non-urban schools and thirty-seven (51.4%) urban schools are anticipating changes in their physical education, health, and safety curriculum.

APPENDIX A

NEW JERSEY STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
DIVISION OF GENERAL ACADEMIC EDUCATION

SURVEY OF THE HIGH SCHOOL PHYSICAL EDUCATION, HEALTH, AND SAFETY PROGRAM

Purpose: To learn the current status of physical education, health and safety programs.

1. COUNTY _____
   DISTRICT _____
   SCHOOL _____

2. IN A SCHOOL YEAR, A STUDENT IS ASSIGNED TO PHYSICAL EDUCATION:

   a. ____ weeks per year (the number of weeks in this question and question 8 should equal the number of weeks in a school year)

   b. ____ days per week

   c. ____ periods per day

   d. ____ minutes per period

3. IN PHYSICAL EDUCATION WHAT PERCENT OF TIME PER SCHOOL YEAR IS SPENT IN THE FOLLOWING ACTIVITIES?

   a. LOCKER ROOM ACTIVITIES (changing, showering, etc.) _____

   b. ADMINISTRATIVE TASKS (attendance, discipline) _____

   c. WARM-UP ACTIVITIES _____

   d. INSTRUCTION - PRACTICING NEW SKILLS/REINFORCING SKILLS _____

   e. OTHER _____ _____

   TOTAL 100%

4. IN PHYSICAL EDUCATION WHAT PERCENT OF TIME PER SCHOOL YEAR IS SPENT IN THE FOLLOWING ACTIVITIES?

		9	10	11	12	
a.	FORMAL PHYSICAL FITNESS ACTIVITIES					%
b.	INDIVIDUAL AND TEAM ACTIVITIES					%
c.	CARRY-OVER SPORTS (Instruction)					%
d.	OTHER _____					%
e.	OTHER _____					%
	TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%	

5. IN THE PHYSICAL FITNESS COMPONENT OF THE PHYSICAL EDUCATION PROGRAM, IS A PHYSICAL FITNESS TEST REQUIRED FOR EACH STUDENT?

Yes _____ No _____

IF YES, WHICH TEST IS GIVEN AND IN WHICH GRADE(S)?
(PLEASE FILL IN THE NAME OF THE TESTS AND CHECK THE APPROPRIATE GRADES)

	TEST	9	10	11	12
a.	_____				
b.	_____				
c.	_____				
d.	_____				
e.	_____				

6. ARE ATHLETIC TEAM MEMBERS IN ALL SPORTS EXEMPT FROM PHYSICAL EDUCATION DURING THE SEASON THE SPORT IS BEING PLAYED?

ROUTINELY _____ NO _____ ON AN EXCEPTION BASIS ONLY _____

7. IS THERE A POLICY OF INDEPENDENT STUDY (CREDIT FOR ACTIVITIES NOT PERFORMED DURING SCHOOL TIME, ON SCHOOL GROUNDS, AND WITHOUT ATTENDING CLASS) IN PHYSICAL EDUCATION?

YES _____ NO _____

IF YES, IS THE POLICY COMMON KNOWLEDGE TO STUDENTS AND PARENTS?

YES _____ NO _____

WHAT PERCENTAGE OF THE STUDENTS IN THE DISTRICT TAKE ADVANTAGE OF INDEPENDENT STUDY? _____

8. IN A SCHOOL YEAR A STUDENT IS ASSIGNED TO HEALTH EDUCATION AND SAFETY:

   a. ____ weeks per year (the number of weeks in this question and question 2 should equal the number of weeks in a school year)

   b. ____ days per week

   c. ____ periods per day

   d. ____ minutes per period

9. PLEASE INDICATE HOW MANY WEEKS DURING EACH YEAR A STUDENT RECEIVES INSTRUCTION IN THE FOLLOWING HEALTH AND SAFETY SUBJECTS. WRITE THE NUMBER IN THE CORRESPONDING GRADE BOX. (MORE THAN ONE SUBJECT MAY BE TAUGHT IN ONE GRADE.)

SUBJECTS	GRADES			
	9	10	11	12
a. FAMILY LIFE				
b. DRIVERS EDUCATION				
c. DRUG AND ALCOHOL ABUSE				
d. NUTRITION				
e. FIRST AID AND SAFETY				
f. OTHER _____				

10. IS YOUR DISTRICT NOW REVISING OR ANTICIPATING REVISION OF THE PHYSICAL EDUCATION, HEALTH, AND SAFETY CURRICULUM?

    YES _____ NO _____

    IF YES, WHAT ARE THE REVISIONS, OR WHAT REVISIONS ARE ANTICIPATED? PLEASE DESCRIBE BRIEFLY ON A SEPARATE PAGE.

11. Person completing survey _____ Phone ( ) _____

    Contact Person, responsible for the information (if different from above)

    _____ Phone ( ) _____

    Chief School Administrator _____

    (signature) _____ _____

Return to County Superintendent by May 12, 1987

APPENDIX B

Mean Patterns of Instruction in Physical Education

Urban vs. Non-Urban

Mean	Urban (N=72)	Non-Urban (N=234)
Weeks Per Year	25.93	27.86
Days Per Week	4.96	4.80
Periods Per Day	1.00	1.00
Minutes Per Period	42.65	43.70
Minutes Per Week	211.56	210.08
Hours Per Year	91.18	97.25

APPENDIX C

Mean Percent of Time Spent By Students In Each Physical Education Period Performing Specific Tasks

Urban vs. Non-Urban

Task	Urban	Non-Urban
Locker Room Activities (changing, showering, etc.)	19.62%	21.58%
Administrative Tasks (attendance, discipline)	6.27%	6.17%
Warm-up Activities	13.05%	11.60%
Instruction- Practicing New Skills/Reinforcing Skills	57.36%	57.96%
Other	3.69%	2.69%

APPENDIX D

Mean Percent of Time In Physical Education Teaching Specific Activities

Urban vs. Non-Urban

Activity	Grade 9		Grade 10		Grade 11		Grade 12	
	Urban	Non-Urban	Urban	Non-Urban	Urban	Non-Urban	Urban	Non-Urban
Individual and Team Activities	46.4%	52.2%	40.8%	51.2%	42.9%	44.2%	42.5%	43.3%
Physical Fitness	27.5%	22.7%	25.8%	20.6%	22.2%	19.6%	21.1%	19.3%
Carry-Over Sports (Instruction)	20.2%	20.5%	22.3%	24.0%	28.2%	32.6%	30.0%	34.0%
Other (specified by high schools)	5.1%	3.8%	4.3%	3.1%	5.7%	2.6%	6.0%	2.6%
Other (specified by high schools)	0.8%	0.8%	0.8%	1.1%	0.8%	1.0%	0.4%	0.8%

APPENDIX E

Breakdown of Schools Requiring and Not Requiring a Physical Fitness Test

Urban vs. Non-Urban

Percent (Total Number of High Schools in Category)

Fitness Test	Urban	Non-Urban
Required	78.4% (58)	78.6% (195)
Not Required	18.9% (14)	19.8% (49)
Schools Not Responding	2.7% (2)	1.6% (4)

Total Number = 322

APPENDIX F

Comparison of Responses to the Exemption of Athletic Teams Members From Physical Education Classes

Urban vs. Non-Urban

Total Number of High Schools in Category (Percent)

	Urban	Non-Urban
Routinely	3 (4.1%)	5 (2.0)%
On An Exception Basis Only	65 (87.8%)	218 (88.3%)
No	6 (8.7%)	24 (9.7%)

Number of schools = 321

APPENDIX G

Policy of Independent Study in Physical Education

Urban vs. Non-Urban

Percent (Total Number of High Schools in Category)

Policy	Urban	Non-Urban
Yes	14.9% (11)	18.1% (45)
No	85.1% (63)	81.9% (203)

SUPPLEMENT III

SPORTS PARTICIPATION FIGURES FOR 1987-88

SPORT	Boys Participation			Girls Participation		
	V	JV	F	V	JV	F
Baseball	6019	5586	5582			
Basketball	4446	4257	4241	3762	3222	1838
Bowling	1509	628	37	900	398	19
Cross-Country	4196	954	548	2706	541	244
Fencing	402	145	25	237	117	9
Field Hockey				3253	3016	1448
Football	10724	6498	2497			
Golf	2614	368	94	83	28	9
Gymnastics	261	43	22	1122	153	44
Ice Hockey	979	335				
Lacrosse	741	633	461	571	600	402
Skiing	213	68		136	1	
Soccer	6396	5492	3267	3608	2592	583
Softball				5490	4621	2783
Swimming and Diving	2301	206	27	2353	266	65
Tennis	3568	1131	160	3481	574	144
Track and Field (Indoor)	4511	765	411	2261	412	137
Track and Field (Outdoor)	9977	1244	1243	7533	923	491
Volleyball				1314	1016	245
Wrestling	5000	3524	1912			

From: New Jersey Interscholastic Athletic Association Bulletin. December, 1987.

STUDY OF PHYSICAL, HEALTH, AND SAFETY EDUCATION IN NEW JERSEY

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REVISING OUR PERSPECTIVE ON THE ROLE OF PHYSICAL, HEALTH, AND SAFETY EDUCATION IN NEW JERSEY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Questions and Answers

Question #1. Why was the study of physical, health, and safety education conducted?

Answer #1. When the State Board of Education was deliberating the increase of the graduation requirements for social studies, science, and math, members of the state board questioned whether the requirement for physical, health, and safety education should be further reviewed. The question was raised in the context of:

- the current physical education requirement which exceeds all others (and is equal to the English requirement for students who complete high school in four years and exceeds the English requirement for students who take longer to complete high school);
- reduced available time and flexibility of schedule for students to study elective subjects and to obtain remedial, bilingual, and vocational education; and
- an expanded mission of public schools to prepare all students academically for a more complex and technological society.

Question #2. Why is physical education being proposed as an elective course for grades nine through twelve rather than a mandated one?

Answer #2. The reasons for the proposal are several:

- The current statutory mandate requires <u>all</u> students, elementary (except kindergarten) and secondary, to take physical, health, and safety education for each year enrolled. In the high school, this results in physical, health, and safety education comprising 23 percent of the core academic requirements and 18 percent of the total credits (110) required for graduation.
- Secondary schools need more flexibility in the daily schedule in order to accommodate programs to meet students' learning needs and interests (i.e., vocational, bilingual, compensatory education, fine and performing arts, computer science, multiple foreign languages, journalism, etc.).
- Currently, approximately one of every three high school students participates in interscholastic sports.

- More than 80 percent of students' physical activity occurs outside of school. The increase in the variety of exercise programs, exercise machinery, and organized sports leagues provides students with a multitude of alternatives to those physical activities provided in school.

- The demands upon our schools to prepare all students with the skills to think critically, solve problems, reason, and make decisions have increased. With a declining entering labor force, students must be adequately prepared to assume roles as productive citizens in our society. Schools must concentrate on providing opportunities for students to master the necessary skills which will allow them to become fully productive and functioning members of society in the 21st century.

Question #3. Schools have assumed increased responsibility not only for students' academic learning and behavioral development, but also for their health and well-being through breakfast, latchkey, and driver education programs. Since schools are taking on increasing responsibilities, shouldn't they continue to teach physical education to all students, including those in grades nine through twelve?

Answer #3. Physical education, particularly fitness, is important and may be offered to grades nine through twelve students as an elective at the discretion of the local school district. The decision to offer physical education should result from the input of educators, students, and parents and reflect the students' academic, socialization, and health needs. From among these competing needs, priorities for program offerings must be determined. The present physical education mandate limits the options of these individuals to make such decisions and set priorities.

Many breakfast, driver education, latchkey, and counseling programs occur either prior to or after school hours. Many school districts offer these programs in response to students needs although no mandates exist.

Question #4. Historically, physical education has been conceived as necessary for students' academic and social growth. Physical education has been espoused in this country since the "Cardinal Principles of Secondary Education" were adopted in 1918. Centuries before, the Romans linked "a sound mind and a sound body." Isn't the change of the physical education requirement disregarding the link?

Answer #4. No. There still is a link between a sound mind and a sound body. However, requiring all secondary students to take physical education every year has not resulted in a physically

fit student population. At the same time, however, students have not had adequate time in their schedules for educational programs. As a result, the requirement needs to be changed.

The change does not eliminate physical education for students in grades nine through twelve. Instead, it allows school districts to deliver physical education based on the educational needs of the students, the resources available to the schools, and student interest. With this change, secondary schools will have the flexibility to determine when and how physical education fits into the program and to provide more individualized attention to those students who are in need of or interested in it.

Question #5. If national reports indicate that our students are not physically fit, why propose to discontinue the physical education mandate?

Answer #5. As indicated by the department's survey, 73% of a 40-minute high school physical education class is spent on physical education activities and only 20% (about 7 minutes) of that time is spent on fitness activities. Furthermore, according to a review of New Jersey's and other states' physical education requirements, no direct relationship between fitness and the number of years that physical education is mandated has been found. Finally, the majority of students' physical activity occurs outside of school.

Question #6. Will the change in physical education requirements affect the elementary grades?

Answer #6. No. The proposed change in the physical education requirement will not affect the elementary grades (one through eight).

Question #7. Why is the recommendation to change the statutory mandate only for grades 9 through 12, and not for grades 1 through 8, too?

Answer #7. The current concern is with preparing all students academically so that they will graduate from high school as fully productive and functioning members of society in the 21st century. In deliberating over this concern, the Commissioner recognized the need for a more flexible high school schedule to meet students' needs and interests (i.e., vocational, bilingual, compensatory education, fine and performing arts, computer science, journalism, multiple foreign languages, etc.). Therefore, it is recommended that the statutory mandate of physical, health, and safety education in grades 9 through 12 should be amended.

It is fully recognized that elementary schools must develop the foundation for the academic knowledge and skills that students are to master in high schools. As the high school

curriculum has changed in response to increasing academic needs, the elementary curriculum must change and be increasingly coordinated with the high school curriculum. However, at this time, the recommended change is only for grades 9 through 12.

Question #8. If physical education is not producing physically fit students, why not improve it and continue it as a mandate instead of making it an elective course?

Answer #8. The proposed assessment at grades 3, 6, and 10 will help determine the level of student fitness. The assessment could be used to determine the need for fitness programs for secondary schools, as well as the need to improve existing programs. Given the competing needs for instructional time in the high schools, physical education should no longer be a mandate; rather, the program decisions about physical education should be the jurisdiction of the educators, parents, and local boards of education in response to student needs and interests.

Those secondary students who meet an acceptable level of fitness should have the option to consider physical education and/or other electives.

Question #9. Why wasn't the physical, health, and safety education requirement reduced to two years rather than eliminated and physical education proposed instead as an elective course?

Answer #9. Since no relationship has been found between the number of years of physical education and physical fitness, no specific requirement of years is proposed.

Question #10. Is the reason for the proposal to change the physical education requirement that physical education is not producing physically fit students?

Answer #10. No. Physical activity alone cannot produce physically fit students. Diet and sound health practices are an important part of physical fitness. The specific reasons for the proposal to change the requirement were previously discussed in Answer #2.

Question #11. If, for example, math education is not producing mathematically knowledgeable students, should it also become an elective?

Answer #11. No. As stated in answer #10 above, this is not the reason for the proposed change in the physical, health, and safety education requirement. What is more, the situations are not even parallel.

Unlike the physical activities that are widely available after school and outside of school, which can be pursued by the

individual student, opportunities for math education outside the classroom are few. Schools are uniquely qualified to teach math education to students, and math instruction must remain a priority in schools. Math is increasingly important as our society becomes more scientific and technological. Math education should continue as part of the mandated core academic curriculum.

From among the recent major national reports (A Nation at Risk, Educating Americans for the 21st Century, Academic Preparation for College, High School, and A Place Called School) indicating those subjects which should be taught in schools to adequately prepare students, all the reports recommended two or more years of math. Only one report (A Place Called School) recommended that physical education should be a graduation requirement.

Question #12. The study focuses primarily on the relationship between physical education and physical fitness. However, physical education meets high school students' other needs, including team and carry-over sports. How do you propose that these needs are met?

Answer #12. As indicated in the study report, team and carry-over sports appear to be thriving in the high schools through intramurals and interscholastic programs, as well as outside of school through organized community and league programs.

School districts should have the option to offer physical education to students for these purposes through elective courses.

Question #13. If physical education becomes an elective in grades 9 through 12, won't many physical education teachers lose their jobs? If there are fewer physical education teachers, who will serve as the coaches and supervisors for the numerous programs now being offered for boys and girls?

Answer #13. It is possible that there will be fewer available jobs if high school physical education is no longer a legal requirement. However, making physical education an elective does not necessarily mean that it will be removed from the grade nine through twelve instructional program.

It is likely that physical education will continue to be offered either before, during, or after school. In addition, local boards of education could devise flexible instructional schedules for physical education teachers who also serve as coaches. In effect, the result could be an innovative and creative approach to solving the problem of the shortage of supervisors and coaches.

Question #14. How will the physical fitness test(s) be selected? Who will be responsible for reporting the results?

Answer #14. The department, with the assistance of local New Jersey educators and others, will review the available physical fitness tests and will report the options for the testing program to the Commissioner. It is recommended that local school districts will be responsible for administering the fitness test(s) of grades 3, 6, 10, and reporting the test(s) results to parents and the public.

Question #15. Is the department going to set a statewide standard for passing physical fitness?

Answer #15. No. As with the proposal for the high school core course proficiencies, which also would require periodic statewide assessment, no passing scores will be set by the department. It is anticipated that levels of fitness will be identified, and students' scores will be reported within the specified levels. Further, it is recommended that the results of the test(s) will not be used by the state to determine the outcome of a course (course grade or graduation credits), should a student be enrolled in a course for the purposes of physical fitness. These options of offering a course, the grade, and local graduation requirement are proposed to be the jurisdiction of the local school district.

As stated in Answer #14 above, options for assessment, including fitness levels for the purpose of public reporting, will be recommended to the Commissioner.

Question #16. How will the changes affect the high school health education requirements?

Answer #16. The health education requirements for substance abuse and family life will remain. The decision of how to offer these requirements will be the jurisdiction of the educators, parents, and local boards of education.

Question #17. Since the health education requirement remains unchanged, how do you recommend that schools meet the 10-hours of instruction mandated by the drug and alcohol curriculum requirement and the family life education mandate, while also responding to the needs for AIDS education?

Answer #17. The programming and scheduling for these requirements will be the responsibility of local school districts. Based upon our knowledge of existing programs, there have been multiple approaches to programming for health education, substance abuse prevention, family life education, and AIDS education. These programs present opportunities for the schools to respond to students' growth and developmental needs and for

students to receive current information, to ask critical questions, and to learn communication, decision-making, problem-solving, and coping skills. These programs have generally been infused in courses of health education, which includes family life education, substance abuse education, social problem-solving skills, nutrition, parenting, etc. Some secondary schools have also infused the teaching of these skills and knowledge across the curriculum, as well, for the purpose of reinforcing the skills as they pertain to issues in science, social studies, sociology, psychology, and home economics courses.

Question #18. If a high school student does not meet an acceptable level of physical fitness, why doesn't the state propose to mandate physical education for that student?

Answer #18. It is proposed that the state not mandate physical education for that student because school districts should have the flexibility to respond to this and possibly other learning needs and interests (i.e., vocational, bilingual, compensatory education, fine and performing arts, computer science, journalism, mutiple foreign languages, etc.,) of the student. For a student whose level of physical fitness is low, it is proposed that local school districts will have the authority to offer fitness program options. Districts may provide opportunities for such students to participate in physical fitness activities before, during, or after school. However, districts must recognize that fitness is also influenced by diet and health practices.

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